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Honorary Degree Award Citation for Michael LaMarca

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Recommended Citation

Lawrence University, "Honorary Degree Award Citation for Michael LaMarca" (1995). *Faculty Award Citations*. Paper 88.
<http://lux.lawrence.edu/facultyawards/88>

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Honorary Degree Awarded to Retiring Faculty

Michael J. LaMarca, Professor of Biology

"Now it can be told. In 1970, a forlorn young biology major, working desperately to complete a senior thesis, happily welcomed his fiancée to the laboratory. He had not seen her for more than a week, so immersed was he in his studies. And as he gazed at her lovingly and gratefully, in stormed his thesis director to chase her away so that the young man could concentrate on his work. What heartless, unromantic grinch could do such a thing? Michael LaMarca is the very one.

But as you know full well, both that student and his wife of twenty-three years have long since forgiven you. Indeed, he has now moved on to be professor and chair of an important department of obstetrics and gynecology, and as you also know, he identifies you as the single greatest influence on his career. His gratitude and affection are unbounded; in that, he resembles countless other students whose memories of your teaching and mentoring are as strong, if perhaps less personally traumatic.

It has been a commitment to the disciplined study of the living world that has distinguished your career as a scientist and teacher (although there are those who question the level of discipline involved when you recorded unicorn heartbeats in Omro, Wisconsin). From the study of amphibians to the exploration of human reproduction, you have guided your students in both the technical and ethical investigation of biological science. Your contribution to the *in vitro* fertilization program at Appleton Medical Center has been essential to the impressive successes of the first such program in northeast Wisconsin. Under your tutelage, outstanding Lawrence undergraduates have begun distinguished research careers there. Your own research in developmental biology has earned you a place of influence and honor in the scientific community, and you have prodded and encouraged your students to attain the highest level of excellence possible. Because you have insisted upon remaining current in your field, you constantly bring innovation and excitement to your classes, and students have always found that excitement infectious. That dynamic is the essence of distinguished teaching in the liberal arts and sciences. The college and your colleagues are grateful for your service.

By the authority vested in me, I now confer upon you the degree of Master of Arts, *ad eundem*, and admit you to its rights, its privileges, and its obligations."

Citation read by President Richard Warch at Commencement, 1995